

February 5, 2019

The Honorable Elijah Cummings
Chair, House Committee on Oversight and Reform
United States House of Representatives
2471 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am writing to voice my support for H.R. 1, "For the People Act of 2019," and specifically Titles VIII and X of H.R. 1. If enacted, this legislation will greatly enhance public confidence in the integrity of the United States Government. I served my country from 1982 until 2013, as an active duty officer in the United States Navy, as a member of the Senior Executive Service in the Department of the Air Force, as the General Counsel of the United States Office of Government Ethics (OGE), and as the Acting Director of OGE from 2011 until 2013. OGE was created in 1978 as one of many much needed post-Watergate reforms, along with public financial disclosure for senior government officials, including those of the President and the Vice President. H.R. 1 builds on those principles and 40 years of experience, and provides long-needed updates in ethics legislation.

While I was at OGE, I worked with both the Bush and Obama Administrations. Both President Bush and President Obama supported OGE and its mission and took steps to ensure their personal finances and interests were transparent to the public. This included releasing their personal income tax returns. Title X of the H.R. 1 will ensure that our current President, Vice President, and future occupants of those offices will, as a matter of law, make full disclosure of their financial interest and sources of income. These are important measures to codify into law.

Title VIII of the Bill also provides many much-needed updates to the authority of the Director of OGE to oversee and enforce ethics laws and regulations across the Executive Branch. Among those provisions of the Bill I support are those that extend the cooling off period between senior Executive Branch appointees and their former employers to two years. Additionally, H.R. 1 removes any ambiguity as to whether the Executive Office of the President is subject to certain provisions of the Ethics in Government Act and oversight by OGE. Finally, the Bill would codify into law important principles of transparency for Presidential transitions. These and many other provisions of the Bill will strengthen the integrity of our democracy, and I commend the Committee for engaging in this important work.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on H.R. 1 and your support for ethics reform.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Fox", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Don W. Fox